

THE HISTORY OF POCAHONTAS COUNTY  
 CHAPTER XI  
 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

(Chapter Questions)

1. Pre-community Life--Social Aspect.

- a. Social Life in the Home, etc. What social functions were performed in the home? What ceremonies were performed? Did entire family meet to listen to Bible readings? Were there sessions of prayer in which the group jointly participated? Were there formal occasions when the head of the family lectured or taught the children? Was there a strict ordering of relationships between members of the family? Was extreme formal politeness a part of the life, even part of the time? Were there special dinners or other festive occasions when the family group behaved differently from the habits of ordinary daily life? Were there seasons of singing, musical instrument playing of any sort? Check life to get any activity that is essentially cultural or social as differentiated from economic and necessary. (Marriages, funerals, etc., were such occasions.)
- b. The Church as a Social Institution. What did the establishment of churches mean to the social side of community life? Were the meetings a diversion for the families? How often were they held? Did the church make more formal and ornate such ceremonies as marriages, funerals, etc.? Did the churches sponsor such activities as sing fests, picnics, box suppers (or their equivalent)? How did the churches unite the widely scattered settlers? Did it give them a common interest? A common meeting place? Did it encourage music, art, literature? Did it increase educational standards? Did it awaken new desires (social)? Did it promote subordinate groupings that increased social tendencies? Your latitude here is of your own choice; get everything on this subject you can. Make it as detailed as possible.
- c. Festivals, Games, etc. What festivals were held? What games were played? Were there general hunts when all over a wide area participated? Were there corn-shucking contests? What pioneer habits of life were social in their aspect? How did economic needs determine the social activities in some cases? (For instance, the harvesting time when many gathered to do one man's crop, then the next man's, and so on.) Get all social activities possible, and reasons for their observance, way they were observed, who and how many observed them.

2. Beginnings of Community Life.

a. The First Group Settlements, etc.

1. What common habits were brought over from earlier life farther east? How were settlers different or similar in cultural and social background? When several families lived near each other, what habits had they in common? Did they have common possessions? Did they borrow from each other? Were they of similar religious habits or

The History of Pocahontas County  
 Chapter XI--Cultural and Social Advancement--(Chapter Questions)  
 Page 2

beliefs? Did they cooperate in protecting each other against outside dangers? Anecdotes are usually available to illustrate these points.

2. What forms of parties, meetings, sports, had the pioneers? How did community settlement lead to greater group interest in these matters? What holidays and festivals did the pioneer community celebrate? Fourth of July? May Day? Thanksgiving Day? Describe increase of interest in cultural and social lives fostered by group living. Did it organize the community in promoting sports, recreations, social get-togethers of any other type?

3. What lodges or other secret or public orders were there? What did they do? Purpose? Type? How many members? What functions in society? What clubs for special purposes were there? How did they operate? Who were members? Who organized them? (Always get persons and places in the report. The more names, the better the article.) Were special groups formed for appreciation of work in the arts? What, why, how, when?

b. Influence of Schools.

1. Where were teachers secured? Were they better educated than rest of populace? Did they foster the element of culture? How? What effect did they have on social life in the community? Did they elevate the habits of the people in any way? Did they organize new social activities? Describe their work in detail. Name teachers whose influence was readily felt. How did they accomplish their aims, if any? Schools undoubtedly, even if only small few-grade affairs, contributed heavily to growth of refinement.

2. How did the growth in school enrollment contribute to higher standards in the community? What ideas of social habit were originated in the school? Was the growth in art appreciation, music, etc., a result of increased learning? How can this relationship be shown in your county? What parts of social life were a direct outgrowth of school activities? How did schools encourage social gatherings? List ways. Explain how they started. Who started them? Why? From what did larger ideas about social conduct receive their impetus? Were they brought in by outside people (instructors), or were they gleaned from books, or did they arise spontaneously in the minds that received greater enlightenment? Go into this as thoroughly as possible. Write up all individuals who really had influence. There are many chances for use of names here. Games, sports, etc., had participants--give their names, stories about them, what they said or wrote about the activities connected with their names.

3. Narrative of Progress.

a. The Gradual Growth of Cultural Understanding. This section will cover the years of growth from the early seedlings of culture to the present intricate patterns of it. A good deal of freedom must necessarily be given the research staff in handling this part of the book, but a few things must be noted. Always give complete pictures of any one subject before proceeding

The History of Pocahontas County  
 Chapter XI--Cultural and Social Advancement--(Chapter Questions)  
 Page 3

to the next. As time went on and the county became more thickly settled and, therefore more civilized, more musical instruments must have come into the section. Here is an opportunity to show how their arrival was caused by the rise in standards and increase of leisure, and at the same time to demonstrate their effect on its further increase. In the same way more pictures were bought and this increased interest in art forms. Perhaps there were periods when portraiture or crayon drawing became the fad. These are interesting developments and will enable you to place many names in your manuscript. Treat literature in the same way. What was read? What was available? Dates? Places? Persons promoting such interest? Trace evolution of education as a factor in cultural growth. It is important to show here the effect that growth in general education had in broadening the wants of the people to include things of cultural value. Do not stress growth of physical plant. In treating public institutions, show that the establishment of each contributed to further cultural appreciation. Do not be afraid to state that culture in its higher forms has not become very well established in your county. Dates, names are important in this section in particular for the progress must be based on advance with the years and installation of new institutions and ideas.

- b. Social Up-sets. During periodical upheaval changes occur in the way of life that changed the way of living as well. Did the Civil War leave your county poor? Or was there little noticeable effect of war conditions? Did any artists emerge? In art? Literature? Music? Did these cause an increase in interest in national affairs? Did this increase use of reading facilities? Did it bring more magazines into the county? More books? What libraries or other reading groups were formed as a result? What crises occurred within the county? What issues of national scope affected the county inhabitants? Use anecdotes to illustrate how county felt about issues. How they acted upon them. The question of the teaching of evolution in such a topic. Others will come to mind or may be discovered by talking with the older residents. Here will come any struggles within the county over local actions of various kinds. Whether to establish high schools. Use of taxes for roads. And many others. The researcher must discover which affected his county and the details of action. Any points of definite adoption of new ways, new ideas, new manners should be treated fully. If fully aware of the possibilities the worker will find this subject of great interest. Some of the struggles will still be fresh in the minds of older citizens. Much can be said about them, with names of those who were actively engaged. Many passing influences were instrumental in securing a broadened social basis of life. The adoption of group ways of living. Give as many and their effects as possible, never forgetting names of those connected with the matters. Even the establishing of police protection has often been a subject of controversy in growing communities. What events promoted the adoption of various social institutions? Perhaps a murder or robbery led to increased police protection. Perhaps a drowning led to supervised swimming or the building of a pool, or the establishment of a Red Cross chapter and Life Saving training. These will serve as guides in running down items along this line.

the History of Pocahontas County  
 Chapter XI--Cultural and Social Advancement--(Chapter Questions)  
 Page 4

c. Awakening to the Wide World. With the coming of regular postal service, delivery of weekly, then daily, newspapers, magazines, and with ease in obtaining other reading matter, there must have been an increase in demand for more parties, more social clubs, groups, etc. All this makes up cultural growth. Show the gradual growth of the county in these matters. When was regular postal service established? When and what newspapers established routes in the county, (outside newspapers). Here again currents of national progress may have a direct bearing on those within the county. When this was true, you will have a topic that can be developed to advantage in showing the work of local people in promoting or fighting these changes or programs. When was the first newspaper established within the county? Why? By whom? Give all details of its history, fights it engaged in, why, etc. Tell about establishment of libraries. Why? By whom? How many volumes? All other pertinent facts. Treat schools, colleges, recreation centers, other such institutions, giving details of establishment, history, etc. In the section on gradual assimilation of county characteristics into the general picture of the state, you may show this in any way you choose. Show how early conditions of isolation created differences that were gradually ironed out by growth of communication.

4. The Status Quo: Present Panorama.

a. Recent Changes in Outlook and Situation. Here we begin to deal with the actual present. What do we have now? How does it reflect the progress we have made? What influences do current opinions about major problems have on the cultural picture? Does the community reflect the changed national attitude toward aid to cultural progress and institutions? Is there acceptance of the idea that recreation, health programs, cultural aid program are necessary to a modern community? Does the community support a recreation program? What is the attitude toward the public works activities of local or federal governments? What program is there? Show how social consciousness has been increased and how it is reflected in higher standards for the community as a whole. Children now possess many more toys, etc., and the work of WPA recreation leaders has led to a wider adoption of play programs and recreation activities among the general population. Describe these activities and their effect.

b. The Church of Today as a Social Establishment. Has the influence of the church declined or grown? Socially? Politically? What effort is made toward organizing society around the churches? What churches are there? Describe in detail their activities (social). Especially deal with the activities of the church in communities where other social leadership is absent. You will find the church goes far afield from purely religious tasks when necessity demands it.

c. The Educational Institutions' Social Activities. How does the educational set-up act socially? What affairs are sponsored by the schools? What contact with home life is maintained? How do school policies reach into the home? How do they increase use of cultural instruments? What effect do they have on the habits of the people? Have the schools ever led in promoting reforms? Is there a program of adult education

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